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ABSTRACT

The Paraprofessional Training Project at California State University, Chico, is operated through a consortium of the University, Colusa County Schools, and Butte Community College. The 3-year program provides trainee paraprofessional teaching staff to work with the predominantly Spanish-speaking, limited-English-proficient school population of the school district while the trainees are improving instructional skills and gaining university credit applicable toward a later degree. It includes formal classroom and related field experiences for the trainees. Program improvements recommended include offering more courses in convenient off-campus locations and cooperative efforts to develop creative and flexible work scheduling. (MSE)

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

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ABSTRACT: This Paraprofessional Training Project work, through a consortium of three distinct entities: California State University at Chico, Colusa County Schools, and Butte Community College. The program provides trained teaching staff to work with a predominantly Spanish-speaking limited English proficient student population. The intent of the project is to enable paraprofessionals working with the Limited English Proficient (LEP) students of the Colusa County Schools to earn college credit while improving their instructional skills over the short term and providing them with community college and university course work applicable to a college degree and beyond.

California State University, Chico has established strong teacher training programs in bilingual/multicultural education, bilingual special education, and speech pathology. California State University, Chico will train twenty-five paraprofessionals in bilingual/multicultural education. The contents of this project detail the instructional design, the critical need for this activity, the goals, objectives, and competencies to be developed by the trainees. The project also details the plan of operation, budget requirements, evaluation plan, key personnel, and the University's experience in this endeavor.

INTRODUCTION: The Paraprofessional Training Project presents information regarding a consortium designed to train paraprofessional teaching staff to work with language minority students. Need, impact, program objectives and design are presented. Further, results of this program and effectiveness are discussed.

BACKGROUND: The Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Studies has been housed on the CSU, Chico campus for the past eight years. It has a successful history of operating federal and state grant programs. Since its inception, the Center has administered funded programs ranging from Bilingual Teacher Training to Bilingual Special Education, Bilingual Speech Pathology and Audiology Resource Personnel Training. Through a consortium of three distinct entities: California State University, Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Studies, Colusa County Schools, and Butte Community College, the grant was developed and funded to support a paraprofessional training effort to increase the number of better trained individuals working, or preparing to work, with limited English proficient students at the classroom level. The project allows paraprofessionals of Colusa County Schools to earn college credit which will lead toward a degree and meet certification requirements while improving their instructional skills. The program currently trains 28 employed paraprofessionals during the approved budget period. These participants were identified

and selected through a process which involved Center for Bilingual/ Multicultural Studies staff, School District officials and representatives of Butte Community College. Only those individuals who can commit to the three year program were eligible for consideration.

DESCRIPTION: The California State University at Chico based Paraprofessional Training Project provides training opportunities to all staff working with or preparing to work with LEP students throughout Colusa County. Over the past several years, Colusa County has witnessed a rapid increase in its language minority population. The greatest growth has occurred within the Spanish-speaking, Mexican-American population.

The Paraprofessional Training Program includes both a formal classroom and related field experiences in a three-year program which earn the paraprofessional Community College credits, all of which count towards the completion of a certificate of training and toward an associate or baccalaureate degree. The schedule of courses has also been designed to meet the stated needs of the paraprofessionals and the Colusa County Schools. These courses, and field experiences provide meaningful experiences with curricular content that is compatible with the goals of this project.

The paraprofessional training program falls organizationally within the Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Studies at California State University, Chico. The Center is operated out of the College of Education with the Director of the Center reporting directly to the Dean of the College through the Associate Dean and Department Chair.

The Center is staffed by two full-time tenured faculty, one classified staff person, and three part-time professional staff who assist in teaching university courses, supervising student teachers, and providing general support services. The University Foundation and College of Education provide support to the Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Studies. Thus, California State University, Chico is committed to continue, expand, and build upon the program when Federal assistance ends.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) Participants have requested that CSU, Chico courses be offered "closer to home." University satellite ITFS (Instructional Television Fixed Service) provides one outlet for required courses which may be taken without driving to the Chico campus, and CSU, Chico classes may be offered with selected undergraduate faculty, in other disciplines, offering classes in Colusa.

2) Participants have asked to take a full academic load. Concurrent to working fulltime this creates genuine hardship. Arrangements may be made with districts to develop creative work scheduling to facilitate completion of necessary undergraduate preparation.